



THE EYE SHIELD

Issue 12

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MESSAGE FROM ME

Welcome to the twelfth issue of The Eye Shield. Jake Collins is on duty once again. I hope this issue will appear on the website in the right month, unlike the delayed issue eleven, and that you will all enjoy it. For those of you who like a little variety in your Eye Shield, look out for my latest one-off article entitled *The Best of the Rest*, where you can read my views on some other television programmes that I have enjoyed. And don't forget, of course, to enjoy all your regular favourites. If you have a spare moment on December 1st, raise a glass to TES; it will be six years old on that date. It is good to have its second incarnation underway, but take a look at the paragraph below if you want TES to continue indefinitely.

CORRESPONDENCE

This month's e-mail comes from Jamie Murray of London. The reason I have not selected a different reader's views to explore this month is that Jamie is the only one who has bothered to get in touch with me. I am now beginning to appreciate how Paul McIntosh must have felt when he was editing TES in bygone times: neglected. Please tell me what you think of the new TES, or submit an article if you're feeling particularly adventurous. The address follows: get in touch!

Dear Eye Shield.

I was just reading about the on-line Nightmare RPG, the general professionalism of which surprised me. Why don't you do an article about it for TES? You could cover the preparations for the new season, write up the season itself or do a recap of previous seasons. If I enter, I'll write it up and submit it.

As I said to Jamie, I know nothing about the RPG but would gratefully receive any contributions relating to it, or anything else Nightmare-related. Although I envisage TES as more of a composition by me than a fanzine nowadays, it would be nice to feature articles by other Nightmare fans. Thanks for your e-mail, Jamie, and keep reading.

REMEMBER THIS?

Series 8. Level 1/2/3.

REACH FOR RUNES

One of the many new aspects of the final series was the *reach* wand, presented to the dungeoneer at the start of the quest. Sometimes it was used for opening trapdoors and freeing sorceresses, but its main function was to clear runes off blocked-off doorways. Often on level one, and occasionally on levels two and three, an exit would be blocked with six rune slabs, containing simple line patterns. One slab had one line, another two lines, another three, another four, another five, and the other six. The advisors had to guide the dungeoneer's hand as it moved the *reach* wand to shoot at the runes and dispel them in the right order, causing the portcullis behind to rattle up, leaving the exit clear.

To start with, the right order was simply 1-6 in order. Earlier teams had to work this out for themselves, but this did not appear to be a problem. Lissard had apparently designed this puzzle. During Mike's quest, Lord Fear told Lissard to change the combination. It became all the even values going down followed by all the odd values going up. (6,4,2,1,3,5.) The later dungeoneers, Rebecca and Dunston, had to earn this information from characters. Stiletta told it to Dunston, while the main focus of Rebecca's level one was to find the correct combination. Lord Fear disguised himself as Brother Strange and gave her the wrong code. Brother Strange himself gave her the right code. Fortunately, they chose to trust the right one. The only dungeoneer who was denied exit from a rune lock was Richard III, the first dungeoneer of the series. It was on the trapdoor at the end of level one, but the team had no idea how to attempt it, or even to use the wand, as they had failed to earn that information from Stiletta earlier on. Bhal-Shebah promptly arrived and toasted Richard. I would not blame his death on this particular puzzle, though, as the team had completely bungled level one by ignoring the information on the scroll. Hmm, that sounds like a good candidate for a future *Classic Quest*...

Difficulty: 4 An approaching troll or dragon could be a distraction.

Killer Instinct: 3 Just one of the many contributors to Richard's death.

Gore Factor: 8 Being fried by a fireball is fairly spectacular.

Fairness: 10 Richard was doomed anyway.

ADVENTURE TIME

Last time, dungeoneer Paul completed level one and had a brush with Mogdred in level two. The score is still Dungeon 2, Humans 1. Can Paul and his friends change that scoreline for the better?

The level two clue room follows. The team are faced with the choice of a key, a gauntlet and a large bone.

"Hurry team" Treguard warns. "I sense that Mogdred is still close by."

The team quickly tell Paul to take the key and the bone and direct him out. He emerges into a courtyard with a rope hanging from the ceiling. Climbing down it is a small figure in green garments.

"Warning team, I hope none of you are sensitive to insults" Treguard chuckles. "This is Elita, the rudest cavern elf in all the world."

"Oi, you!" Elita snaps as she strides over to Paul. "What do you think you're doing here, face-ache?"

"Um, I'm on the quest for the Sword" Paul manages to reply.

"Oh, really" Elita says with disdain. "And what's your name, then?"

"Paul."

"What a stupid name! Even worse than other stupid dungeoneer names I've heard. Well, I'm much too busy to help you at the moment because I'm on a hunt."

"Perhaps I could be of help?" Paul offers hopefully.

"And why would you want to do that, face-ache?" Elita sneers.

"So that you'll help me in my quest."

"Here we go, they always want my time and help!" Elita spits. "Well, I'm on the lookout for a firestone for Smirkenorff. Some gormless idiot fed him a dragon mint that had gone off and he needs it to settle his stomach. I suppose you do know what firestones look like? They're big red gems. Mogdred has got one frozen away somewhere on this level. *If* you find it before I do, you may call me and then perhaps I'll think about helping you. Bargain?"

"Yes" Paul agrees.

"Right" says Elita with more enthusiasm. "My calling name is Elita, but don't tell anyone else or I'll turn you into something unspeakable. Oh, yes, by the way, you'll have to release the firestone first, which means you'll need some sort of hot magic. See you later!"

Elita skips away and Paul is directed out. He emerges into a room that is dominated by a huge spectral scorpion. Beyond it lies a locked door.

"Warning team, this guardian was created by magic" Treguard tells the team. "Although it doesn't quite exist in the true sense, it will still

destroy you if it achieves contact. Avoid that sting, but don't delay!" Paul is directed quickly past the scorpion's swinging tail. He holds the key up in front of him and the door unlocks, meaning that he can leave the room. He emerges into a blue room with a large window. There is a chest on the floor. Someone is frantically rummaging through it. It is Hordriss the Confuser.

"Confound it!" Hordriss exclaims. "Where is it?"

"What are you looking for?" Paul asks as he walks over.

"Don't bother me now, young person!" Hordriss snaps as he turns to look at the dungeoneer. "I have no time at the moment for... wait a minute; you've got it."

"Well, Paul, you've sparked Hordriss's interest" Treguard remarks. "But be careful how you bargain with him."

"What is your name, dungeoneer?" Hordriss asks.

"Paul."

"Well, Paul, you have there a particular ingredient for a potion one has in mind" Hordriss says cautiously. "I'm rather interested in that sphinx bone you are carrying."

"What do you have to offer in return?" Paul asks promptly.

"Well, er, I have any number of spells I could give you" Hordriss says absently, his greedy eyes still fixed on the bone. "What sort of spell would you like?"

"How about one to free a frozen firestone?"

"Very well. Give me the bone."

Paul hands the bone to the mage, who smiles at it, satisfied.

"I thank you kindly" Hordriss says graciously. "I gift you the spell *thaw*. Also, remember this: the third step is *surrender*. Now, be on your way."

Hordriss wanders off, chuckling to himself and fondling the bone. The advisors direct Paul out. He emerges into a room with a large hole spanning the floor. There is a slight extension over the other side of the pit, as well as a grand throne.

"Ah, I see you have reached a magic place" Treguard tells the team. "But to release that magic you must take the appropriate steps."

Paul and the team know what to do. Paul steps up to the edge of the pit and brings his hand smartly up to his head in the style of a salute. The first flagstone appears and Paul steps forward. He then marches on the spot, causing the second stone to appear. Lastly, he holds up his hands in the gesture of a surrender and is then able to step forward onto the magic symbol. A flash of lightning occurs and Merlin is sitting in his chair.

"Very nicely done, young Paul" Merlin commends him. "And congratulations on surviving so far. But if you are to leave level two in one

piece then you will need my magic to help you. Two truths I need from you; two out of two or it just won't do! Here, then, is the first. A thing unseen, its voice is loud. It can overturn ships and cause endless destruction, yet its strength cannot pass a barred door. What is it?"

"The wind" is the team's answer.

"Truth accepted" Merlin smiles. "Here is the second. I saw an army forage through a hundred miles of countryside. Not a blade of grass did they trample, nor spill a drop of blood. They carried their cargo below their belts. What did I see?"

The team are stumped by this riddle. As in level one, Paul offers a suggestion.

"Rabbits" he says.

"Falsehood" says Merlin gravely. "A swarm of bees was the truth I sought. Sorry, Paul, but I did warn you. Now you will have to follow the path without my help. Good luck."

Merlin disappears in a magical flash. Paul is directed out. He emerges into a red room with a large archway as an exit. There is a firestone in a block of ice.

"Here is the object you seek" Treguard comments. "But how can you release it?"

"Spellcasting:" declares an advisor. "T-H-A-W."

Sure enough, the ice disappears. Paul picks up the firestone and calls Elita:

"Elita, Elita, Elita!"

"Well, got it, have you?" Elita asks shortly as she appears.

"Here it is" says Paul, handing it over.

"Thank you" Elita says more kindly. "Now, I'm off to level one to give this to Smirkenorff, but not without first redressing the balance. I have a spell for you. Its name is *fillet*. I don't suppose you know what it does?"

"Um, is that the one that disintegrates bones?" Paul says uncertainly.

"Hm, not as thick as you look, are you?" Elita admits. "Well, good luck with your quest, face-ache."

The elf runs off. Paul is directed through the archway, into a room that has one single exit on the far wall. Blocking it is the huge skeletal figure of a catacombite.

"Extreme warning team" says Treguard. "This catacombite is blocking your exit and there is no way past without being destroyed."

"Spellcasting:" the advisor cries. "F-I-L-L-E-T."

The catacombite gives a huge groan before clattering to the floor in a hundred different pieces. Paul is now able to pick his way through the debris to the exit. On the other side is an empty cavern with no visible

means of exit.

"Warning team" Treguard says sombrely. "Level two is complete, and this is the wellway room, but, as you see, the well is not here. You needed magic to reveal the wellway, and you could have got that magic from Merlin. But you didn't! Now you are doomed to starve here."

"Wait a minute!" cries the spellcaster. "We've got that spell from Mogdred. Spellcasting:"

"No!" shout Paul and the other two advisors.

"V-I-C-T-O-R-Y."

Mogdred's eerie echoing laughter occurs as the fiend himself appears in the chamber in front of Paul.

"Well, well, how delightful" Mogdred gloats. "You have summoned me. I would have been quite happy to merely watch you starve here, but now I have the opportunity to relish the more personal touch."

Mogdred grabs the front of Paul's T-shirt and hoists him off his feet and out of the chamber. The Dungeon bell sounds to announce another failure.

"Ooh, nasty!" says Treguard with some relish. "You should never trust Mogdred, team, and you paid the price. Spellcasting: D-I-S-M-I-S-S."

The next dungeoneer is called Nick. He enters the Dungeon and emerges into a small stone room with a single exit. As his advisors are describing it to him, a whirring and clanking can be heard to be approaching.

"Out quickly, team, it's the Mindless Mechanical Warrior!" Treguard urges.

As Nick is directed out, the Automatum clanks into the chamber. He slowly advances on Nick with his huge morning star swinging menacingly. Clearly flustered, the advisors take some time to direct their dungeoneer out. Nick emerges into a long hall with a door at the far end. He is directed towards a table containing clue objects.

"There's a bar of gold, a candle and a potion" Nick tells his advisors.

"Prepare for a trial of wits, team" says Treguard. "All these must be earned."

The far wall begins to change shape, and the door becomes a gaping mouth.

"I am Phelheim!" proclaims the wall monster. "All my gifts must be earned. Listen carefully to my riddles, dungeoneer, for if you fail I will grind you in my jaws of stone. Here is my first. How can a knight be known other than by his name?"

"His coat of arms" is the team's answer.

"Truth accepted" says Phelheim. "Here is my second. Dutch Elm Disease makes trees turn bare. But what condition makes humans turn yellow?"

"Jaundice" Nick replies.

"Truth accepted" Phelheim says again. "Here is my third. What are the apples of the oak?"

"Acorns" says Nick immediately.

"Truth accepted" Phelheim says testily. "Three is the score. Your quest is to find the Shield, but it will not defend you. Guards may be bribed. The first step is *sorrow*."

"Remember, team, a perfect score means you may command him and he must answer" Treguard reminds them.

"I command you" says Nick.

"I hear you" answers Phelheim. "The path of truth is well lit. The walls await me."

Phelheim disappears, leaving the team to choose from the objects: a bar of gold, a candle and a bottle of potion.

Do you think Nick is up to the challenges of level one? Will the team choose the correct objects? Read the next Adventure Time to find out.

PUZZLE PAGE ONE

Here you have to find the names of Knightmare characters hidden within sentences. You may remember this from a previous issue. Here is an example: "He watched the friendly **ogre tell** a story to the children."

1. This story has a slow ending.
2. The book was a nice, mild read.
3. If you send your application form off to UCAS, perhaps you'll get into university.
4. Robert rolled out the pastry into a neat circle.
5. Don't forget to enrol a farm animal on the course.
6. Would you rather have no tongue or a cleft pallet?
7. Is there a rat in your cellar?
8. Your touching rap tore my heart from its strings.
9. You've been at the mini-mart a while.
10. Judi Dench is officially a formal dame.

REMEMBER HER?

Series 1/2. Level 1.

LILLITH

One of the major aspects of the original Nightmare, the sorceress Lillith appeared in six out of the eight episodes in series 1. The actress behind the red robes, yellow cloak and blue crown was Mary Miller. Escaping Lillith's domain was a level one challenge, and it needed to be completed successfully in order for the dungeoneer to survive. The domain itself was dominated by a large serpent's head, whose mouth was the exit. A pit stood between the dungeoneer and Lillith. If the dungeoneer had an object that Lillith wanted, she would summon her magic causeway so that they could pass through. (*Lillith: "Rock to rock and stone to stone, span the pit and cross the zone."*) She might also give them a spell, which would be needed to complete the level. If the dungeoneer had not taken the correct object, Lillith would take the ground from under their feet and they would plummet to their doom. (*Lillith: "I have no time for those who bumble, so boulders crack and that ledge crumble."*)

She returned for series 2, but only met every other dungeoneer, as she shared them with Mildread, also played by Mary Miller. The distribution became somewhat uneven later in the series, leaving Lillith's series 2 total of dungeoneers encountered at five and Mildread's at eight. Anyway, that was the challenge in hand. Lillith herself had a distinctly sinister air about her. She always spoke dangerously calmly, making it quite clear that the sovereignty in this chamber was hers, not Treguard's. She clearly had complete power of life and death over the dungeoneers, often trying to trick them into crossing when there was no causeway. She was very aggressive to the advisors, and had no time for their "chitter-chatter".

However, her manner was not unfriendly once she had been given an object she liked, for example a ruby, a bar of gold, a pearl necklace or a silken glove. Conversely, her manner was very unfriendly - outraged and derisory in fact - if she was not offered an appropriate object, and she immediately killed the hapless dungeoneer. Because of this ruthlessness, Lillith has three victims to her name, which is the highest total for any single Nightmare character. Those foolish dungeoneers were Mave from series 1, and Akash and Anthony from series 2.

Fear Factor: 6 A distinct aura of threat.

Killer Instinct: 8 The most of any character, though a fairly small proportion.

Humour Rating: 7 She liked to tease and laugh at dungeoneers.

Oscar Standard: 8 Very good - sinister and mocking.

CLASSIC QUEST

Series 8

Quest: The Sword of Freedom.

Dungeoneer: Daniel II.

Advisors: Gideon, Ben and Justin.

Home town: London.

In his Eye Shield interview, Tim Child named these four incorrigible Jewish lads as the team he most remembers. I'm not surprised, either. It is impossible to describe how het-up Gideon gets by everything, screaming *Oh my God!* at any given opportunity. Indeed, it is Gideon's lack of control over his wild emotions that is ultimately responsible for Daniel's death. There can be no denying, however, that it is a brave and admirable attempt at conquering the Nightmare Dungeon.

Level One: After a mad dash through the snap-dragon infested dwarf tunnel, Daniel emerges into the level one clue room. After some initial trouble in understanding the message on the scroll, Gideon leads the team into deciding to take the *Acme self-operating danger-horn*, which warns you of danger if you encounter it. Daniel looks through the spyglass. Lord Fear and Lissard are playing Dungeon Monopoly (Wolfenden High Street, Get Out of Dungeon Free card etc.) when Sylvester Hands appears on the telescreen. Fear tasks Hands with finding Stiletta and getting back an object that she's stolen from him. The team decide that Stiletta might like the pendant that is on the table, and she might give them the object that Fear wants in exchange. A room with a tiled floor follows, where the horn immediately sounds.

Gideon panics wildly as fireballs drop from the ceiling. Daniel is guided out by Gideon's expert manoeuvring. (*Gideon: "Oh my God, Daniel! Run, quickly, run! Go on, run!!!"*) Miraculously, he makes it to the door. Stiletta is in the next room. Daniel just manages to avoid drowning in his own lust-induced saliva as he speaks to her. He warns her that Sylvester Hands is coming to get her, and also offers the pendant as a trade for the object she's stolen from Lord Fear. Stiletta agrees that it is a very nice pendant, and gives Daniel a ring that she says can disintegrate skeletrons. As Daniel is being directed out, Hands arrives. Stiletta soon sees him off by throwing a few of her knives at him. The trapdoor chamber follows. A skeletron guards the way, but the ring soon disintegrates it. The team do

not know how to open the trapdoor, but Brother Strange arrives to help them. Gideon thinks that it is Hands coming for revenge, but then realises that it isn't. (*Gideon: "Oh! Sylvest... oh."* *Justin: "It's the monk!"*) In return for a proverb, Brother Strange opens the trapdoor by magic and gives Daniel a FLOAT spell. When this is cast, he floats safely down the trapdoor, and into level two.

Level Two: Majida is very surprised to see that Daniel has landed in the corridors of Goth, which she recognises as level three from the previous series. Treguard explains that the old levels have changed, and that level three now lies in the Great Mire, below Goth, where Lord Fear has made his new home. Snapper-Jack is the team's first challenge of this level. They answer all three of his riddles correctly, so he is forced to slink off empty-handed. After negotiating the corridor, Daniel enters the clue room. After reading the scroll, containing a pun on the word *humerus*, Daniel is instructed to take a large bone that is on the table. Another spyglass sequence follows, in which we are introduced to Maldame. Lissard tells Lord Fear who she is, then she immediately starts demanding that Lord Fear gives one of his illegally-built towers - Linghorm - to her as the ruler of the Mire-world in return for her alignment with him, leaving the other tower - Marblehead - for himself. She asks for the word-key to Linghorm. Unimpressed, Lord Fear freezes her. Just before the sequence ends, he tells the word-key to Lissard: it's *Phoenix*.

After some further deliberation, Daniel then picks up a *fearsome* potion from the table. Next it's the Sewers of Goth. The boat is waiting to take Daniel across, but the one who arrives to row it is Sylvester Hands. After promising Daniel death, Hands slinks off to find some ammunition for his catapult. Daniel takes the potion and turns into Lord Fear. When Hands returns, he is full of apologies. He rows the person he believes to be his master through the sewers without delay. Gideon is panicked again in the next room; it has sliding blocks between several rows of floor. Miremen are seen to be following Daniel. Again he manages to escape. In the next room, Daniel is accosted by Raptor and some miremen. By holding the bone out, Daniel is able to make Raptor laugh uncontrollably (*humerus/humorous*, you see) and he runs off in hysterics. Daniel has to dash past the miremen. The frozen Maldame is in the next chamber. Justin instructs Daniel to free her with the *reach* wand, which he does successfully. In return for the word-key to Linghorm, Maldame opens the door to level three for Daniel. There is a stair-case on the other side,

which leads down into Linghorm.

Level Three: After negotiating the corridors of Linghorm, Daniel emerges into his final clue room. Here he picks up a red key and a *sight* potion. He has to dodge some fireballs on the way out. He meets Honesty Bartram in the next chamber, who is interested in a bit of trading, as usual. In exchange for the potion, he gives Daniel the spell SHADE. Honesty Bartram also tells Daniel that he must travel across the mire on the Golden Galleon to reach Marblehead, where the Sword waits for him. The docks of Linghorm follow this chamber, and Daniel is able to get on board the ship. He has to sneak past two miremen who are guarding the way down to the hold, for which SHADE is used. Daniel finds another spyglass below decks. Through it, the team see Lord Fear cursing Lissard for putting Bhal-Shebah on guard duty, as Daniel may be able to defeat him by taking advantage of his two different personalities. He also tells Lissard the word-key to Marblehead - *confusion*.

At the docks of Marblehead, Daniel meets Maldame again. In return for the word-key, she agrees to help him enter and escape Marblehead. Daniel gets a green gem that opens doors by magic and a summoning-spell from Maldame. The spell is called SAVONT, and will call any sorcerer to Daniel so that they may help him escape when his quest is over. We do not get to see exactly how this would have worked. Maldame's gem enables easy access to Marblehead, but the challenge waiting inside is the dreaded Corridor of Blades. Unfortunately, Gideon takes control of guiding Daniel out of the blades' path - and he completely loses control! Before long, Daniel has been sliced by a blade. We are treated to blood spurting all over the screen.

Summary: An excellent team, let down only by Gideon's panic in the Corridor of Blades. They deserved to win, in fact, but, like Martin and Leo before them, one level three mistake spoiled everything.

Score: 8 out of 10.

Rooms: 21, and 1 tunnel.

LOVE WYRMS

Having been lured into the villainous clutches of Lord Fear, Orion waits below Marblehead. Surely it cannot be that long before the evil one reveals his true intentions.

"Brekkers!"

Orion looked up eagerly as Lord Fear shoved a scared looking dwarf into the pen where the young dragon was being kept.

"It's alive," Orion pointed out helpfully.

"You're not used to killing your own food?"

"Mum usually does it for me."

"I see," Lord Fear said. "Well, your mother isn't here now."

"I know," Orion said, looking dolefully at the ground. "I don't want to kill it."

"You what?"

"It looks so frightened," Orion said, watching the dwarf as it looked around desperately for a means of escape. "Couldn't you just bring me a steak or something?"

"You're lucky to get anything," Lord Fear snapped, his expression suddenly angry. "I'm going to leave you in here with this dwarf. If you don't want to starve, you'll eat him."

"I could..."

"No you couldn't." Lord Fear stepped back, snapped his fingers and at once there appeared a force field around the open pen. It glowed a dull red and hummed monotonously. Lord Fear was just visible on the other

side. He turned and left.

Orion and the dwarf remained silent for a good half hour. The dwarf obviously expected Orion to kill him; he looked first terrified, then suspicious, and finally very puzzled. At last he sat cross-legged on the ground and waited for something to happen.

"What's your name?" Orion asked him at last.

"Widget."

"I'm Orion."

"Um... it's nice to meet you," Widget said warily. "Pardon me for asking, but aren't you going to eat me?"

"No. How did you get caught?"

"Green chap got me in a big net as I was coming out of the mine shaft."

"What were you mining?"

"Gold."

"Have you got any on you now?"

"I'm afraid not, young fellow," the dwarf replied, shrugging his shoulders. "It was all taken by that chap with a skull on his head."

There was another long silence, until finally Orion said, "I miss my mum."

"Where is she?"

"Don't know."

"Oh dear." Widget sounded sympathetic. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to ask Lord Fear to let me go." He paused. "I'm hungry."

"Oh..."

"Do you know any magic?"

"Not much. Not enough to outwit that fellow. Don't you know any dragon magic, son?"

"A little. I wish I knew how to get rid of the force field."

"You and me both. It don't half make a noise."

Orion wandered over to the edge of the pen where the force field began. He reached out a claw and touched it. Nothing happened - it was just like touching something solid, as though it were a brick wall.

"That's one powerful force field," Widget marvelled. "He really doesn't want us to get out, does he?"

"No." Orion turned to face him. "We're not going anywhere."

*

Tassie, meanwhile, was absolutely livid. Orion had been missing all night. Shortly after sunrise she had found her way out of the Dungeon to Nightmare Castle, where she planned to ask Treguard for his help.

Treguard was woken up by a very loud - and I do mean VERY loud - knock at the door, followed by a high-pitched screech. He leapt out of bed, flung open his bedroom door and yelled out, "WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?"

He was alone in the castle. Majida was out buying bread and washing up liquid. Remembering this, he went back into his room and pulled open the shutters at the window.

"Argh!" Instead of a blazing orange sun he was met with a large green eye. Alarmed, he closed the shutters again and hoped it would go away.

"Open them you sod!" came an angry female voice from outside.

"Tassie?"

Treguard opened the shutters again. The eye had moved back and made

way for the dragon's face.

"What are you doing here?" Treguard asked.

"I need your help. Orion's gone missing."

"What do you expect me to do about it?"

"Find him!" Tassie cried desperately, making Treguard jump back in alarm.

"Well... where did you last see him?"

It was very early, he hadn't had any breakfast yet and he was still in his pyjamas. This was not what Treguard needed.

"Wolfenden. He came here to find Smirkenorff."

"Perhaps he's with Smirk-"

"I'm not a complete idiot, you stupid little man!" Tassie snapped. "That was the first place I looked! Smirky hasn't seen him. He's looking for him now, okay?"

"I won't help you if you're going to be a nag about it," Treguard retorted.

"Okay okay, I'm sorry."

"Okay if I get dressed first?" Treguard asked.

"If you must."

*

"Ah good, I see you've eaten that dwarf," said Lord Fear, returning to Orion's pen some time later.

"Yes."

"Don't suppose you saved any?"

"No."

"Then I'll have to send Lissard out to find another. Orion, there's someone I want you to meet."

He stepped aside and in came a green dragon, about Orion's age. She seemed totally comfortable with what was happening. Orion wondered where Lord Fear had found her, but he didn't dare ask. He didn't like this character now nearly as much as he used to.

"This is Emerald," Lord Fear said. "Emerald, this is Orion."

Silence.

"Well," continued Fear, "I'll leave you to get acquainted."

As Fear was leaving the invisibility spell wore off, and Widget appeared in the middle of the pen.

"Coo, a troll!" Emerald exclaimed delightedly. "Let's eat it!"

"No!"

Emerald lashed out at the dwarf but Orion threw himself between them. The green dragon stepped back, a little surprised, then indignant.

"What's your problem?"

"He's my friend."

"Friends with a dwarf?" She scoffed, and then said, "Never seen a pink dragon before."

"I'm a mixture."

"Mixture. Right. What's with the force field?"

"We're prisoners."

"Yeah?" She didn't seem to care. "I like it here. That bloke's all right, isn't he?"

"No."

"Well I like him. Sure you don't want to eat the troll?"

"Yes."

Orion felt that he was going to get sick of Emerald very soon indeed. She had a high-pitched voice that went straight through him. Every time she spoke it sounded to Orion like someone was continuously bowing the e-string on a violin. Widget didn't think much of her either, so to stop her from talking about her holiday in Skegness he said, "Does anyone else think we should try and break out of this place?"

"Could do," Emerald agreed. "Probably wouldn't do much good, though. He's very powerful, isn't he? Wish he'd hurry up with that dwarf."

"I'm not letting you kill any dwarves," Orion said firmly.

"Meanie."

"Ask him for a goblin," Widget suggested. "Surely you can kill a goblin."

"I want to see my mum," Orion said.

Emerald looked suddenly very sorry for him. She hesitated, then went towards him, put a clawed hand on his shoulder and said, "Don't worry, mate. You can see your mum really soon. I'll get you out, ok?"

"How?"

Her expression became earnest and she looked around thoughtfully. "Don't know. One simply can't dispel a force field that powerful, can one."

"No." Orion sighed deeply and sank to the ground. "I don't suppose one can."

Will Orion get to see Tassie again? Is his new ally all she appears to be? Will Treguard get his washing up done? Read the next thrilling instalment of *Love Wyrms* to find out.

CREATURE FEATURE

Series 7/8. Level 1/2/3.

TROLLS

They weren't much like Guy Standeven's Troll from series 2, but Lord Fear's giant stone warriors were always described as such. Trolls stomped throughout the entire Dungeon in series 7 and 8, intent on squashing or clubbing dungeoneers. Often only their footsteps could be heard, leading to a frantic rush to leave the chamber, but meeting a troll in person was always very dangerous. They were large grey warriors, often only seen from the waist down, as they were so tall. They wielded giant axes or clubs. Trolls were notoriously unintelligent, and presumably did not have the will or the drive to object to Lord Fear's mastery over them. They were used either to lurk nearby as a threat to get moving, or as a lethal obstacle that needed to be passed.

The classic example of this is the level one challenge in series 7 that involves dodging a giant club that is swinging across the path, which is straddled by huge troll legs. Trolls were twice partly responsible for a death: that of Ben III on the Trial by Spikes. Read about it fully in last issue's *Remember This?*, but I'm sure you remember that Ben was killed here because of an earlier fatal error. Troll steps were also heard approaching just before the death of Nicola II in series 7. She was trapped in a dark tunnel and had nothing to light it up, so she couldn't go any further.

A relative of the troll, the mire-trog, was introduced at the very end of series 8. (**Treguard**: *"It's like a sort of troll, except bigger and squashier and definitely nastier."*) Its introduction at this late stage seemed rather unnecessary to me, but never mind. Lord Fear was very keen to use the trolls to assert his authority. This is proved in the extreme by his attempt to send the king of the trolls to destroy Knightmare Castle at the end of series 7. His name was Bulstrode, and he was apparently the king because he was more intelligent than the other trolls were. (**Lord Fear**: *He's got six words, some of them pronouns, and he can count up to five.*) But Bulstrode's reign of terror was short-lived as Barry returned with the troll-hammer, which sent him plummeting back down to Goth.

Fear Factor: 9 Very large and frightening.

Killer Instinct: 3 An asset to Nicola and Ben's deaths.

Humanity: 7 Looked very human, but bigger.

Gore Factor: 2 Only as repulsive as the next humanoid.

I THINK I READ SOMEWHERE

KNIGHTMARE: Fortress of Assassins

Published by Corgi in 1990.

Written by Dave Morris.

Plot: As a small procession of tradesmen's caravans speed hurriedly across the desert, a lone female warrior prepares to relieve them of their most prized treasure: the sword of Richard the Lionheart. Meanwhile, Treguard is travelling through Europe to try and find allies who will help him in his rebellion against the tyranny of King John of England. One such knight is Edmund of Blaye, who directs him St. Severine's Abbey. Along with his newly-acquired travelling companion, Dugald of St. Julien, Treguard here receives an exciting and important quest: to recover the child of Richard the Lionheart, held prisoner at the Fortress of Death in the Holy Land, home of the assassins, and take him back to England as the true king. The quest is long and arduous, taking Treguard and Dugald across frozen mountains, storm-swept seas and baking deserts. They encounter two allies on the way, Elshander the dwarf and Abraham the merchant. Can the four of them together stand up against the Fortress of Death and its inhabitants, namely the assassin hordes, an evil wizard, the powerful Old Man of the Mountains, and the notorious warrior Queen Hel? Can you?

Quest section: This quest is all about proving your worth as a chivalrous knight. It begins with one of several encounters, either with a hungry warrior, a vile old man, Pickle and his imp market, or an old woman and a group of ogres. There are several ways through. On the way down to level two, there is the chance to capture a boggart and gain some useful information. But watch out or he'll steal everything you've got. Level two begins with having to prove to Hordriss that you are not a goblin in disguise, before choosing one of two ways through to level three. The first involves listening to Motley for a while before trying to avoid a vampire. The second is longer and more profitable; as long as you can answer Granitas's question, free Mellisandre from an evil witch and avoid the Wight's tomb, you can gain useful information for level three. Before you descend to this level, Treguard tells you that your quest is to recover a crystal key. In level three, you must defeat an evil devil-knight. If you have pleased Hordriss or Mellisandre appropriately, you will know how to summon and defeat him. If you haven't got this information, you have to work it out for yourself. If you're unlucky, you then have to run past a

group of blood-sucking bats; watch out! Finally you meet Malice. She guards the crystal key, but has also imprisoned Pickle. A choice has to be made that will make or break your quest: the key or Pickle's freedom.

Characters from the main story.

Giacommo: He is one of the party transporting the Lionheart's sword, and the sole survivor of Queen Hel's attack.

Santino: Giacommo's brother is prepared to give his life to try and prevent the sword from being recaptured by the assassins. And he does just that.

Queen Hel: She is a formidable warrior and one of the assassins. But she is also much more than that, as Treguard later finds out, to his horror and dismay.

Treguard: He gets more than he bargained for in his crusade against King John. The quest for the Lionheart's heir, he believes, is the perfect opportunity to oust John from the English throne.

Sir Edmund of Blaye: He is reluctant to join Treguard's cause at first, but soon changes his mind. He helps Treguard to find the Abbey, where the quest begins.

Dugald of St. Julien: The young knight insists on joining Treguard, and proves his worth in a fight against a dryad. It is later revealed that he is the son of the late Brian of Gascony, whom Treguard met in the first book.

Abbot Gregory: The leader of the monks at St. Severine's. He tells Treguard and Dugald of a dying Knight Templar who has foretold their coming.

Hubert of Lindfield: The Templar in question. He tells Treguard and Dugald the story of how the Lionheart's heir ended up in the assassins' clutches.

Elshander: This Alpine dwarf joins Treguard and Dugald in their search. He is chiefly on the look-out for elephant meat in the Asian markets, but soon becomes dedicated to finding the heir, despite being very

mischievous. The cloak of invisibility that he wears aids this unfortunate trait.

Abraham ben-Levi: The Jewish merchant arranges a ship for the questers' voyage to the Holy Land. He is also forced to join the band as Elshander spooks the local townsfolk by appearing from his cloak, and they burn Abraham's house because they think he is a devil-worshipper.

Theodore of Tarsus: He is a friend of Abraham and agrees to take the group to the Holy Land on his ship. He is none too pleased when Elshander accidentally sinks it as they are about to dock.

Rashid: The evil sorcerer from the Fortress of Death. He disguises himself as Philip the Presbyter to gain the group's trust, then returns to his master at the fortress to report the intruders' impending arrival.

Reginald of Chatillon: The leading Knight Hospitaller gives the group sanctuary on their holy quest. He also makes Treguard realise that their progress is being watched, as he reveals that the real Philip the Presbyter is dead.

Hasan: The Old Man of the Mountains is in charge of the Fortress of Death. When the battle between Treguard, Dugald, Elshander and Abraham, and Rashid, Queen Hel and the assassins, is over, he is the sole survivor of the inhabitants of the Fortress of Assassins. And it is he who reveals the truth about the Lionheart's heir.

THE BEST OF THE REST

If you have not learned anything else from TES in the past few months, you should certainly have worked out that Knightmare is by far my most favourite television programme of all time. That is not to say, however, that I have not enjoyed other programmes in my life. Just to show you that I am not completely obsessed with Knightmare and nothing else, here are some details about some of those programmes. How many have you watched and enjoyed?

Sooty (1952 - present.)

Presented by Harry Corbett, Matthew Corbett, Connie Creighton, Brenda Longman, Richard Cadell, Liana Bridges and Vicki Lee Taylor.

Who can honestly say that they haven't enjoyed the antics of the little yellow bear and his puppet friends at some point in their life? Such is Sooty's appeal that he has been on television for almost fifty years, on both ITV and the BBC, alongside several human presenters. Over that time there have been many different names for his show, including *The Sooty Show*, *Sooty's Disco*, *Sooty and Co.* and *Sooty Heights*. I first watched Sooty in the late '80s, when his companions were Sweep, Soo and Matthew Corbett. They were joined by a new puppet character, Little Cousin Scampi, in 1990. One of the saddest events of my life was when Matthew left the show in 1998, handing the guardianship of Sooty, Sweep, Soo and Scampi to the poor replacements of Richard and Liana, two young presenters hoping to make a name for themselves. The third series of *Sooty Heights* is currently showing on CITV, and there are some noticeable changes from the first two series. Sooty and friends have been joined by a Brazilian cat called Mikki, and an old puppet from the '70s, Butch the dog. Also, Liana has been inexplicably replaced by the familiar face of young actress Vicki Lee Taylor. As a final comment, I would say that although the presenters have gone downhill, the puppets have lost nothing.

The Incredible Hulk (1977 - 1990.)

Starring Bill Bixby, Lou Ferrigno and Jack Colvin.

When I was little I enjoyed nothing more than seeing Dr. David Banner get angry and turn into a big green monster, who would then destroy everything in sight. David had been researching the hidden reserves of strength that humans possess, and can only utilise in a life-or-death

situation. As part of this research, he accidentally gave himself a massive overdose of gamma radiation, which caused him to turn into the Incredible Hulk when he became angry, outraged or frustrated. The show was pure science-fiction and the stories and situations were very contrived, but it was all terrific fun. I am currently enjoying repeats of this show on ITV2 on Saturdays and Sundays.

Grange Hill (1978 - present.)

Currently starring Stuart Organ, Lee Cornes and Kelly George.

This secondary school drama continues to handle teen issues in a realistic environment after twenty-three series. Although the sets and characters have completely changed during this time, there is a compelling reality about the show that has kept me involved with the characters and situations since 1988, through primary and secondary school and beyond.

Count Duckula (1988 - 1993.)

Featuring the voices of David Jason, Jimmy Hibbert and Ruby Wax.

This wonderfully surreal cartoon about a vampire duck who had accidentally been turned into a vegetarian was a stroke of genius. It revolved around four brilliant characters, who always managed to keep the action fast and funny. There was the cowardly Count Duckula, the sardonic butler Igor, the dopey yet kind-hearted Nanny, and the unsuccessful vampire hunter Dr. Von Goosewing. The magical Castle Duckula transported them into many hilarious and memorable adventures. The narrator of the piece managed to sound both frightening and very tongue-in-cheek. Particularly poignant was his message at the end of each show: *Goodnight out there, whatever you are.*

Victor and Hugo (1991 - 1992.)

Featuring the voice of David Jason.

A very funny cartoon about two bungling robbers who would try to steal something or rob somewhere each week, and fail. It was on just before Nightmare series 5 and 6 every Friday. The thing I most remember was a running gag that ran throughout the two seasons. Victor released a vicious dog from a box in the first episode - don't ask me how or why - which then attacked him. In almost every episode, the dog-in-the-box would reappear to torment Victor by biting his trouser-legs.

The Dreamstone (1991 - 1995.)

Featuring the voices of Gary Martin and Ellie Beaven.

Another enjoyable cartoon, set in the Land of Dreams and the Land of Nightmares. The Dreamstone was a powerful artefact that sent pleasant dreams to the residents of the Land of Dreams; the noops and watts. The Dream-maker was the custodian of the Dreamstone, aided by a half-fish half-dog called Albert, and two noops called Rufus and Amberley. Trying to steal the Dreamstone and ruin people's dreams was the Lord of Nightmares, Zordrac, a huge blue monster. He lived in the Land of Nightmares, along with his gormless warriors, the urpneys. The main urpney characters were Urpgor, a green urpney who was Zordrac's right-hand man, Sergeant Blob, the urpneys' commanding officer, and two soldiers, Friz and Nug. You wouldn't have thought that even the most talented cartoonist could get five excellent series out of this situation, but it was nonetheless achieved.

The Animals of Farthing Wood (1992 - 1995.)

Featuring the voice of Ron Moody.

A touching cartoon about a group of animals who complete a long journey from their doomed home, Farthing Wood, to a nature reserve, White Deer Park, based on the stories by Colin Dann. By no means was the hardship of this journey dumbed-down for a young audience; some of the characters did not survive the series. The animals were guided by Toad, who had been to White Deer Park before, and led by the cunning and courageous Fox. The other main characters were old and wise Badger, greedy Mole, self-important Owl, snide and untrustworthy Adder, cheeky and mischievous Weasel, and sensible Kestrel. There were also small families of other animals such as rabbits and mice. During their journey, the animals were joined by Vixen, who became Fox's mate, and Whistler, a heron with a hole in his wing. The animals' troubles did not end once they reached White Deer Park, however, as two further series were made about the troubles they encountered there, including a feud with a pack of blue foxes and a take-over bid by a group of rats. Most of the single animals found mates over the next two series. Apart from the foxes, Mole and Weasel were the only animals to start a family on the programme.

Astro Farm (1992 – 1997.)

A clever and original animation set on a farm on an asteroid in outer space. The astro-farmers were Tom, the young protagonist, and his parents. The animals on the farm were Dinko, the family's dog, Daisy, the large pink cow who could produce any flavour of milk, and the clucks, a group of space chickens who laid blue eggs. The other characters were the Gorps, Splodge and Biff, who lived on Gorpdale. Nothing grew on this planet except disgusting slime curd, so the Gorps often tried to steal food from Astro Farm. It was usually Dinko or Daisy that stopped them from doing so. Examples of some of the other problems that occurred on Astro Farm include a broken weather machine, poor crop yields and a faulty astro-tractor.

The Spooks of Bottle Bay (1993 – 1995.)

Featuring the voice of Francis Wright.

An endearing puppet show about the antics of the ghost population of the seaside town of Bottle Bay. The main spook characters were Fred Spook, Sally Spook, Tommy Spook and Baby Spook, the haunters of the old and forbidding House on the Hill, who liked to cause mischief at night. They spent much of their time protecting Bottle Bay from the unscrupulous plots of the two crooked estate agents, Sybil and Cedric Sludge. This often involved helping their dim-witted brother Sid. Sid was the only one who believed in the spooks, and couldn't have managed without them. At the end of every episode, he would make a comment about the strange goings-on in that episode: *"Now that's spooky."* There was the feel of almost a soap opera to this programme as there were many regular residents of Bottle Bay, and several recurring guest stars. There was Captain Patch and his pirate crew, a group of sea-faring spooks, the Pier-os, a group of spook singers who performed on the pier, the highwayman spook Damsk, and my personal favourite, Brenda Drain. She was a young woman who always came to Bottle Bay for her holidays, and Sid enjoyed her company enormously. The spooks were always trying to help Sid impress Brenda, and he needed all the help he could get. Perhaps the best scene from all three series was when Tommy Spook cast a spell to make Sid sing like Gary Glitter, and he performed a very funny song, followed by his catchphrase: *"Now that's spooky!"*

The Ink Thief (1994.)

Starring Richard O' Brien. Featuring Toyah Wilcox and Gary Martin.

A wonderfully surreal comedy-drama about how important it is to use one's imagination, and what power it can give you. Samantha and Jim have just moved to a new town with the strange name of Leaf. They find an old abandoned toy shop, which turns out to be a trans-dimensional portal that leads into a world where imagination power rules supreme. The Ink Thief lives here. His job is to give imagination power to artists and writers, but he has rebelled and is stealing the power for himself. Fighting to stop him are an inter-dimensional librarian, Miss Tiggie, and a group of creatures made from imagination power called bumps. Through some devious trickery, the Ink Thief persuades Jim to his evil cause. Sam joins forces with Tiggie and the bumps to try and win back her brother, and put a stop to the Ink Thief once and for all.

Hey Arnold! (1996 - present.)

Starring the voices of Francesca Marie Smith, Jamil W. Smith, Anndi L. McAffe.

This is a very enjoyable American cartoon about a small kid living in a big city. His name is Arnold. He lives with his grandparents, who run a boarding house, and goes to school at P.S. 118. The events in Arnold's life revolve around the residents of the boarding house and the people he goes to school with. He is always helping them out in various ways, helping them to overcome their problems and better their lives. The other protagonist of the piece is Helga, the girl with a secret love for Arnold. The depth of her character and the insights into her life that we are given make her a favourite character among many fans. The other two main characters are Arnold's best friend Gerald and Helga's best friend Phoebe. Gerald thinks he is super-cool and Phoebe is extremely intelligent. Kids, not adults, do the kids' voices on this cartoon. Because of the inevitable onset of puberty, Arnold is currently on his third voice, that of Spencer Klein. It sounds passably similar to his second voice, that of Phillip Van Dyke, but both sound completely different to his original voice, that of American cult pre-teen crush victim Toran Caudell.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1997 - present.)

Starring Sarah Michelle Gellar, Anthony Stewart Head, Nicholas Brendon and Alyson Hannigan.

Enormously popular U.S. show about Buffy Summers, the teenage slayer of vampires and demons. It is Buffy's sacred duty to rid the world - well,

California at least - of these terrors, guided by her Watcher, Rupert Giles and aided by an ever-growing circle of friends. This show is a wonderful mix of myth and legend drawn from several thousand years of world history interpreted in a sensible and approachable way, and detailed and believable characters who interact excellently with each other. The chemistry between the four main characters - Buffy, Giles, Xander and Willow - is always maintained at a complex and enthralling level. The cast comprises recognisable faces from various teen movies - *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, *American Pie* etc. - and one from a series of Nescafe Gold Blend coffee adverts, for those of us on this side of the Atlantic who are able to remember Anthony Stewart Head - or Tony Head as he was then - in his pre-Giles days.

South Park (1997 - present.)

Featuring the voices of Trey Parker, Matt Stone and Isaac Hayes.

A very funny cartoon about four eight-year-old boys from a snow-covered mountain town in Colorado called South Park. The escapades of Stan, Kyle, Cartman and Kenny as they learn about life, love and everything else through bitter experience are undoubtedly very rude and often tasteless. However, behind the seemingly gratuitous toilet humour lie very poignant messages about today's culture, society and doubtful ethics. South Park utilises the most effective form of satire; as well as making us laugh, it shocks us to the point of outrage, but all it is doing is holding up a candid mirror to its audience.

Mona the Vampire (2000 - present.)

Starring the voice of Emma Isherwood.

Enjoyable Canadian cartoon about a ten-year-old girl who likes to dress up as a vampire and solve ghoulish mysteries. Mona looks for a supernatural explanation to all the strange goings-on in her town, but the adult population always insists that there is a logical explanation. Whoever is right, the problem never abates until Mona and her friends have sorted it out in their own way.

PUZZLE PAGE TWO

Here you have to create a Nightmare alphabet using the names of Nightmare characters. Most letters only require one character, but G and M require five, because there are so many to choose from. The clues are there to help you, but you may wish to come up with some different characters of your own.

1. A _ _ _ _ _ She's a winter witch who hates dungeoneers.
2. B _ _ _ _ _ He's a Celtic monster; feed him with knowledge.
3. C _ _ _ _ The talking key.
4. D _ _ _ _ _ Give him a word, or he takes a limb instead.
5. E _ _ _ _ You must know this one, face-ache!
6. F _ _ _ _ He wears red and green, and makes you laugh.
7. G _ _ _ _ _ He guards the gate, and dispatches hobgoblins.
8. G _ _ _ _ _ His home is a wall.
9. G _ _ _ _ A merry maid.
10. G _ _ _ _ _ The archer of the Greenwood.
11. G _ _ _ _ _ Sometimes of the grey; always of the green.
12. H _ _ _ _ _ Is he a warlock, a wizard or a mage?
13. I _ _ _ _ _ This wall monster is very red in the face.
14. J _ _ _ _ / _ _ _ _ _ A fast-talking tradesman.
15. K _ _ _ _ _ Not from the programme, but our own Adventure Time.
16. L _ _ _ _ _ His plans are very devious.
17. M _ _ _ _ _ The Dungeon's favourite wizard.

18. M _ _ _ _ _ She is regal, yet she squats in someone else's tower.
19. M _ _ _ _ _ Her name says it all.
20. M _ _ _ _ _ His act is wearing thin, and has been for twelve years.
21. M _ _ _ _ _ She'll serve you food, drink or information.
22. N _ _ _ _ _ He is doomed to sail the seas forever in his cursed ship.
23. O _ _ _ _ _ A tree who asks questions about nature.
24. P _ _ _ _ _ Don't annoy her or she'll prick you with her needle.
25. Q _ _ _ _ _ The title of the answer to number 15.
26. R _ _ _ _ _ Look out, ladies, he wants to sing to you.
27. S _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ He'll fly you to level two, if you pay him.
28. T _ _ _ _ _ _ _ The host and custodian of Knightmare.
29. V _ _ _ _ _ A wood elf, keen on courtesy.

POETRY CORNER

It's time to tell the tale of series two's Neil, Jason, Craig and Mark.
Dare you read through to their blundered end?

Neil is whom this year's seventh quest features,
He braves the Dungeon, its puzzles and creatures.
Folly advised the Sword as a quest,
A slithery snake meant there's no time to rest.
One riddle upon which they didn't stagger,
Granitas revealed the secret of the dagger.
In Mildread's room the potion was used,
It left the team a little confused.
What was the word she gave them for,
How could they use it beyond the door?
The dagger was used, the wraith defeated,
And then the level was completed.
After choosing a path and finding a key,
They met Mogdred, who smiled in glee.
Neil was enshrouded by his evil spell,
They beat him by dispelling, just as well!
Past chess, webs and spears they found a study,
Would Merlin be pleased and become their buddy?
To Merlin's warning they managed to clutch,
But the Dwarf and his riddles were a little too much.
SHOVEL they needed, SPADE they tried,
Cedric was angry, at his hand Neil died.

THE BIG ISSUE

They wore the same black costume and radiated the same evil vibes, but who was the best evil level three sorceress: Morghanna or Malice?

MORGHANNA: The main level three enemy from series 3, she had to be overcome to survive the level. Played by Natasha Pope.

Advantages: Morghanna filled the role of a mysterious, threatening presence in level three to perfection. On both the occasions she appeared on the programme, she proved herself to be the most ruthless character ever. Her supremacy within the level was obvious. She appears to have stolen Mogdred's power in level three from him. Mogdred appeared to menace Leo on level three, but did not appear on this level again for the rest of the series. We can assume that Morghanna took his power from him as she met the next two dungeoneers to attempt the level. In the case of Martin II, she sent her mocking laughter to fill the level three chambers, creating an overwhelming atmosphere of threat for both the team and the viewers. The same atmosphere was achieved when Ross and team were mocked by her threatening image while standing over a deep pit. And to prove her power, Morghanna made sure that neither dungeoneer survived their encounter with her, as her haunted axe chased Ross off a cliff, and she later unleashed her magic at Martin's head. Morghanna was the perfect evil level three threat.

Disadvantages: Who is to say that Morghanna did not just strike lucky on these two occasions? Ross's plunge to his doom can be blamed just as much on the skill of the advisor who guided him off the path than Morghanna's haunted axe. As for Martin, he could have defeated Morghanna if he'd earned a spell from Owen. This evidence suggests that Morghanna relied on the teams' shortcomings to instigate her power rather than her own skill. She did not have enough time on the programme to either prove or disprove this. Two appearances are not really enough to judge a character effectively, particularly one of such importance to the quest as Morghanna.

MALICE: Morghanna's replacement for series 4, Malice, played by Samantha Perkins, proved herself also to be a tough level three adversary. She also made bargains with dungeoneers on level one, redeemed in level three.

Advantages: Malice's extreme manner of disdain for dungeoneers et al set her out as a much more threatening character than Morghanna. While Morghanna relied on laughter and hauntings, Malice used her own sneering tones to demonstrate her mastery over dungeoneers. She had plenty of time to establish herself in this series, with appearances on both level one and level three. Her level three appearance with Dickon proved her to be an effective replacement for Morghanna, threatening death at every turn. She also had another aspect to her character: that of using dungeoneers to retrieve objects that she wanted by bargaining with them in level one. This bargain was very one-sided, however, as Malice made it clear that she could and would destroy the dungeoneer if she so chose:

Malice: "What is your quest, Alistair?"

Alistair: "My quest is for the Shield."

Malice: "Oh, but excellent, good fortune. If you had said, for instance, the quest for the Sword, then I would have been constrained to destroy you."

Malice proved herself to be an adequate replacement for Morghanna, and more besides.

Disadvantages: You have to question Malice's claims to power. Despite her threats to kill the dungeoneers she met, she never actually did so, unlike Morghanna. She also kept her bargain with Alistair when he retrieved a gem for her, by giving him a spell to help him succeed. Although Malice threatened to end quests, she actually helped them. Her power was certainly not as formidable as Morghanna's as she did not have such a strong claim on level three. Why couldn't she go and retrieve these objects by herself, rather than letting a mere mortal go in her place? We can only assume that it is because some level three force - presumably Mogdred - would have stopped her. Even though it appears in Dickon's quest that Malice has taken over the rule of level three from Mogdred, the final episode of the series sees Giles being confronted by the evil one himself, indicating that he won the level back from Malice. So, did she really have that much power? I don't think so.

Have you decided now? I would certainly choose Malice as the better character, but possibly give the edge to Morghanna for the most powerful level three sorceress.

PUZZLE ANSWERS

Puzzle Page 1:

1. This story has a **slow ending**.
2. The book was a nice, **mild read**.
3. If you send your application form off to **UCAS**, **perhaps** you'll get into university.
4. Robert **rolled** out the pastry into a neat circle.
5. Don't forget to enrol **a** farm animal on the course.
6. Would you rather have no tongue **or a cleft** pallet?
7. Is there a rat **in your** cellar?
8. Your touching **rap tore** my heart from its strings.
9. You've been at the min-**mart a** while.
10. Judi Dench is officially a formal **dame**.

Puzzle Page 2:

1. Aesandre.
2. Brollachan.
3. Casper.
4. Dreadnort.
5. Elita.
6. Folly.
7. Gatemaster.
8. Golgarach.
9. Gretel.
10. Gwendoline.
11. Grimaldine.
12. Hordriss.
13. Igneous
14. Julius Scaramonger.
15. Kalina.
16. Lissard
17. Merlin.
18. Maldame.
19. Malice.
20. Motley.
21. Marta.
22. Nemanor.
23. Oakley.
24. Pixel.

25. Queen.
26. Ridolfo.
27. Smirkenorff.
28. Treguard.
29. Velda.

NEXT ISSUE

The Eye Shield issue thirteen will appear sometime in January 2002, so keep your eyes open for it. By then I will hopefully have received some feedback from you readers. You'll also be able to enjoy breakdowns of another classic character, creature, puzzle and quest, the latter both in prose and poetry. Find out whether Nick and his advisors are up to the Knightmare challenge. Complete some dungeoneer-related puzzles. Find out what Orion and co. are up to in *Love Wyrms*. Explore the world of the fourth Knightmare book, *The Sorcerer's Isle*, and see Hordriss and Merlin's battle for supremacy. So, until we meet again, it's a happy birthday to TES and a merry Christmas to you lot. See you in January, for the sake of *auld lang sine*!